

Publication of papers presented in a Brazilian Trauma Congress

Publicação de trabalhos científicos apresentados em Congresso de Trauma no Brasil

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: to assess the proportion of papers presented at the XXI Panamerican Congress of Trauma, VIII Congress of the Brazilian Society of Integrated Assistance to the Traumatized (SBAIT) and X Brazilian Congress of Trauma Leagues (CoLT) that were published in full. **Methods:** In the events cited, based in Campinas in 2008, 347 papers abstracts of were presented and published. To evaluate the proportion of complete published works a retrospective observational study was conducted, reviewing the biomedical databases PubMed and SciELO, with support from Google, from the title of the abstracts and list of authors. **Results:** Of 347 papers considered, 25 (7.3%) were from foreign services and 322 (92.7%) national. Ten (2.9%) papers were published, of which six (1.7%) of nursing and four (1.2%) medical. Among these, four thesis publications were identified and only one international work has been published. **Conclusion:** Despite a large number of papers presented at trauma conferences in Brazil, the publications in this area are rare. The academy and the societies of surgery need to encourage the submission of scientific papers even before the presentation in Congresses in order for them to be evaluated for publication in indexed journals.

Key words: Wounds and injuries. Scientific and technical publications. Scientific and educational events.

INTRODUCTION

Many colleges, services and academic leagues in Brazil discuss trauma in their research and educational projects. Through these scientific studies it is possible to promote the development and advancement of knowledge by proposing changes in approaches and interventions to victims of trauma. The importance of scientific research is a recognized fact and, especially in Brazil, its production has grown significantly in recent years, which is confirmed by the increasing number of articles by Brazilian authors published in journals qualified by indexation at the Institute for Science Information^{1,2}.

The dissemination of original works is usually done through publications in professional journals or at scientific meetings, through oral presentations or posters. During these meetings there is promotion of prompt dissemination of knowledge, discussions, stimuli to intellectual thought and collaboration among scientists around the world³. The abstracts of presentations, whether

oral or posters, are considered integral parts of the exchange of scientific information and are recognized as part of scientific progress^{4,5}. However, as unpublished works, they are restricted to participants of these meetings, limiting progress.

In a study by the Cochrane Library, which revised the rates of publications of abstracts presented at meetings of various specialties, it was found that only 45% of them were published⁶. In trauma, despite the increase of scientific production by services throughout Brazil, the number of works from Brazilian authors found in international or national journals is very low, despite an increasing number has been identified in recent decades. Once these studies are published and broadcasted to society, they may be useful for general knowledge, awareness and planning by government agencies, and investment programs in the area of trauma.

In 2008, the XXI Panamerican Congress of Trauma, organized by the Pan American Trauma Society (PTS), the Eighth Congress of SBAIT (Brazilian Society of Integrated Assistance to Traumatized) and the X Brazilian

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Congress of Trauma Leagues (COLT) were simultaneously held in Campinas. The events gathered representatives of over 21 countries for five days, bringing, among the panelists, 68 foreign doctors and 350 national⁷. During the meeting, many papers were presented as abstracts and posters from professionals and academics from various cities in Brazil and other countries⁸. Works such as those, presented at scientific conferences on the subject of trauma, are often inaccessible to other professionals by being restricted to the presentation in this type of event. Our hypothesis is that the literature on trauma still has a few scientific studies originating from Brazilian authors and so this article aims to analyze the proportion of works presented in these three events which were fully published in journals.

METHODS

In 2008, in the XXI Panamerican Congress of Trauma, in the Eighth Congress of the Brazilian Society of Integrated Assistance to Traumatized (SBAIT) and in the X Brazilian Congress of Trauma Leagues (CoLT), simultaneous events that occurred in the city of Campinas, SP, from November 19th to 22nd, 347 works were presented, of which 163 in the form of free themes and 184 posters. The abstracts of all studies published in the Annals of the Congress and contained in the Journal of the Brazilian College of Surgeons, Volume 35, Supplement 1, 2008, were analyzed in this study.

Through the titles of 347 abstracts, a retrospective observational study was conducted until the month of August 2010, referring to the main biomedical databases, PubMed (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>) and Scielo (<http://www.scielo.org/php/index.php>), with support from Google (<http://www.google.com.br/>). To cover the possible cases in which the title of the abstract was altered when published, not being found in this first search, a second survey was carried out, based on the listing of the principal authors.

Thus, for each work two searches were held in each database. When found in its entirety, the abstract of the published study went through an examination in order to see whether the study was the same or similar to that contained in the annals of the congress.

From all the works, we collected general data (identification of the work, class presentation, original title, nationality and geographic location of the service) and specific data from the published ones (published title, journal and index location). The institution considered was the one of first author, being classified as undetermined when the data in the abstract was not possible to identify the service of origin. At the end of the search, all data were tabulated in a spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel®) for analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS

A total of 347 studies were presented (163 abstracts and 184 posters), of which 25 (7.3%) were from foreign services, six (1.7%) from the U.S., six (1.7%) from Colombia, three (0.9%) from Canada, three (0.9%) from Chile, three (0.9%) from Venezuela and four from other countries (Table 1). The other 322 (92.7%) were works of native authors, and the Brazilian Southeast region accounted for approximately 50% of the origins of the work, led by São Paulo State, with 99 (28.5%), followed by Minas Gerais, with 57 (16.4%) (Table 2).

Judging from the works presented, it was observed that 49 (14.1%) were from nursing or physiotherapy areas. Ten studies (2.9%) were published, of which six (1.7%) were nursing and four (1.2%) medical. Therefore, 1.3% of works from medical or trauma league fields and 12.2% of the nursing or physiotherapy fields ($p < 0.01$) were published. Among these ten studies, four (1.2%) were publications from theses, one of which was also published in an international journal indexed in PubMed. Among the other six studies, one (0.3%) was found in a journal indexed in SciELO and two (0.6%) in a journal indexed in PubMed and SciELO. Only one (0.3%) of the works of international authors was published in a non-indexed journal. Still, two (0.6%) other papers were identified by Google, published in national, non-indexed journals (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The results showed a low rate of publications, much lower than those of international congresses, which ranges from 21 to 60% of published abstracts^{9 12}. Even considering the claims of Miguel Dasit *et al.*¹¹, that the country of origin of the work and international collaboration influence in the likelihood that a work may be published, and the ones from von Elm *et al.*¹², that the publication rates vary by medical specialty – congresses of pediatrics

Table 1 - Classification of presentations according to the country.

Country	N	(%)
United States	6	1.7
Colombia	6	1.7
Canada	3	0.9
Chile	3	0.9
Venezuela	3	0.9
Argentina	1	0.3
Qatar	1	0.3
Spain	1	0.3
Mexico	1	0.3
Total	25	7.3%

and surgery had higher rates of subsequent publication of full papers than congresses of anesthesia and emergency medicine, for example – the numbers found in our study seem very low.

By analyzing abstracts presented at a Brazilian Congress of Urology in 2003, a publication rate of 39% was found, comparable to international conferences⁵. When analyzing the abstracts of a congress in the field of dental research in São Paulo a rate of 15% was found¹³, as well as average rate of 6.3% of published works in two congresses of cardiology and vascular surgery in Brazil, revealing how the publication of research is relegated to second place in our country¹⁴. Upon analysis of the publications of studies presented at the XXIV Brazilian Congress of Surgery, a rate of 2.6% was observed, very close to that found in this study, which demonstrates and confirms the low national rates in certain meetings¹⁰. Explanations for these low numbers may reside in possible gaps in the methodological approach, as well as with different titles in publication of the work previously presented at meetings and by variations of the main

authors, whose names are presented in the first citation. In addition, some of the works analyzed in this study may still be published, or are under consideration by journals, although estimates show that the publication occurs within two years in most cases^{9,12,15}. This assertion is based mainly on data from a study that analyzed 19,123 papers presented at 234 meetings from 1957 to 1999 and found a 27% rate of publishing after 2 years and 47% after six years.

Another possibility for the non-publication is the rejection of manuscripts by the requirement of scientific rigor on the part of journals, which would be larger compared to the requirement for presentation at conferences, as abstracts presented at meetings have the function of the initial presentation of completed research projects, of stimulus to follow-up studies and of bringing information to a limited audience in the event¹³. It is known that the rate of rejection by the journals is high, often surpassing the mark of 50%. In prestigious nursing journals, for example, the acceptance rate is extremely low, ranging from 10 to 35% of the submissions^{16,17}. The reasons for this fact are basically related to aspects of quality of the work in relation to the selected publication, as methodological weaknesses, poor presentation and lack of discussion of results, or technical aspects of preparation of the article itself, such as lack of balance between parties, few quotations and very short or very long texts¹⁸. On the other hand, the time required for writing an abstract is significantly lower than the one for writing an article in its full version. This is relevant, considering that an important reason for not publishing alleged by researchers is the lack of time^{18,19}.

Other factors that could influence the filter in the path between the presentation of a study at a conference and its subsequent publication identified by von Elm *et al.*¹² and that deserve attention in our discussion are the publication bias, the research area and the size of the congress where the paper was presented. According to that author and to others, studies with positive results would have greater chances of a subsequent publication than studies with negative results (publication bias of positive outcome)^{12,19}. Works in the area of basic research were also more likely to be published. The same would occur with papers presented at smaller conferences because they have a more rigorous selection than the big meetings, where the organizers, to attract a larger audience, would accept works with lower demand, leading to the selection of studies

Table 2 - Classification of presentations according to Brazilian States.

State	N	(%)
São Paulo	99	28.5
Minas Gerais	57	16.4
Paraná	35	10.0
Maranhão	24	6.9
Bahia	24	6.9
Rio Grande do Sul	21	6.1
Rio de Janeiro	16	4.6
Ceará	11	3.2
Paraíba	6	1.7
Sergipe	5	1.4
Roraima	5	1.4
Pernambuco	5	1.4
Amazonas	4	1.2
Distrito Federal	3	0.9
Espírito Santo	2	0.6
Pará	2	0.6
Goiás	1	0.3
Santa Catarina	1	0.3
Undefined	1	0.3
Total	322	92.7

Table 3 - Profile of the publications.

Area	Publications	Theses	PubMed	SciELO	Non-indexed
Nursing	6 / 49 (1.7% of total)	3	1	2	1
Medicine	4 / 298 (1.2% of total)	1	2	1	2
Total	10 (2.9%)	4	3	3	3

of lesser quality. Perhaps our low numbers were influenced by the fact that the Congress examined here has been a great event and has convened three meetings simultaneously (the XXI Congress of Panamerican Trauma, the Eighth Congress of the X Brazilian Congress SBAIT Leagues Trauma). However, the highest rate of publication of nursing and physiotherapy works when compared to medical and trauma league ones (12.2 vs. 1.3%) was noteworthy. This might be due to the stimulus in colleges and services, primarily nursing, to present quality work in an international traditional congress held in Brazil.

We noted the high proportion of works from the South and Southeast, where São Paulo alone accounted for around 28.5% of studies. This disparity in scientific productivity related to the different origins in Brazil was also found in other medical specialties by other authors. It seems to be a reflection of the high concentration of universities and research centers in the region, attracting large investments and incentives, given that this is the most industrialized and developed region of the country²⁰⁻²².

Something that can be associated with this low production of trauma articles in Brazil is the lack of

organizing systems, centers and records of trauma in our country. There are few services that organize regular meetings of morbidity and mortality, evaluation of cases of avoidable death and the development of quality control, the need for greater attention to trauma in our midst becoming evident²³.

Even with a large number of papers presented at these trauma conferences in Brazil, the publications were rare and, when made, derived from groups of a few centers. Of these, three were in the form of theses, which deal with reflective and theoretical studies, with presentation of the author's ideas, and therefore they have limited content, thus posing questions to the validity of the publication as an object of new disclosure of information to the scientific community.

The results suggest the need for measures to increase the rates of publication. One suggestion, inspired by international conferences, would be the mandatory submission of the manuscript for publication prior to presentation at conferences, thereby encouraging the dissemination of scientific literature on trauma in the country.

R E S U M O

Objetivo: Analisar a proporção de trabalhos apresentados no XXI Panamerican Congress of Trauma, VIII Congresso da Sociedade Brasileira de Atendimento Integrado ao Traumatizado (SBAIT) e X Congresso Brasileiro das Ligas do Trauma (CoLT) que foram publicados integralmente. **Métodos:** Nos eventos citados que foram sediados em Campinas, em 2008, foram apresentados e publicados os resumos de 347 trabalhos. Para avaliar a proporção de trabalhos completos publicados foi realizado um estudo retrospectivo observacional consultando as bases de dados biomédicas PubMed e SciELO, com apoio do Google, a partir do título dos resumos e da listagem de autores. **Resultados:** Dos 347 trabalhos considerados, 25 (7,3%) eram de serviços estrangeiros e 322 (92,7%) de nacionais. Dez (2,9%) trabalhos foram publicados, dos quais, seis (1,7%) da área de enfermagem e quatro (1,2%) de medicina. Dentre estes, foram identificados quatro publicações de tese e apenas um dos trabalhos internacionais foi publicado. **Conclusão:** Apesar de haver um grande número de trabalhos apresentados em congressos de trauma no Brasil, as publicações nesta área são raras. A academia e as sociedades de cirurgia precisam estimular a submissão de trabalhos científicos mesmo antes da apresentação em congressos a fim de serem avaliados para publicação em revistas indexadas.

Descritores: Ferimentos e lesões. Publicações científicas e técnicas. Eventos científicos e de divulgação.

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